PITH AND POINT.

ELEPHANT rides come high, but the people of India will have them.—*Cincinnati Gazette.*

A SCHOOL-TEACHER recently electrified her pupils, who were annoying her with questions, by saying, "Children, I am engaged." Seeing the general look of astonishment, she added, "but not to any fool of a man," and the excitement died away.—*Kingston Free man.*

LITTLE Master Roddy has been in the habit of putting his pennies into the box at Sunday-school, till last Sunday, when he came running into the house in a breathless hurry, and shouted: "Mam ma! I shan't save up my pennies any more. The money don't go up to God. I saw Mr. Kelly take it and put it in his pocket."

AN ingenious drug-store clerk, who suspected that some one was tapping the till, fixed an arrangement on it, so that any one who tried to open the drawer, without understanding it, would get four inches of brad-awl rammed into his hand. And then he went out and forgot to explain the thing to the boss, and as soon as he gets able to be about again, he'd like to hear of a job.

A SAD-LOOKING man went into a Burlington drug-store. "Can you give me," he asked, "something that will drive from my mind the thoughts of sorrow and bitter recollections?" And the druggist nodded and put him up a little dose of quinine, and wormwood, and rhubarb, and epsom salts and a dash of castor oil, and gave it to him, and for six months the man couldn't think of any thing in the world except new schemes for getting the taste out of his mouth.—*Hawkeye.*

THE boys were telling me a pretty good one down at Corning, N. Y., about a young fellow in commercial life named Blakie. He was in the hardware line. One day, when the boss was at dinner, a countryman came in to buy some nuts. He found an article that suited him, and wanted a dozen. Young Blakie looked at the price-list and found that they were listed "25 cents a dozen —30 off." He gave a low, inverted whistle, and then, with a sudden inspiration, he handed the customer five cents and told him he could buy the nuts at the other store. "By George; said he, when he was telling the governor of the transaction, "I thought the best thing I could do was to save the nuts, anyhow."—*Buffalo Express.*

A School for Actresses.

A, ah, ah, aw, e, eh, i, ih, o, oo, ow.

"Drop your lower lip. Lower the jaw; let the sound come. Well."

It is the last scene.

"*Give* me my robe, put *on*——"

"Now stop. Not that way, if you please. I thought we agreed upon the rendering last time. 'Give me my *robe*,

"A dollar bill it is, and you want me put on my *crown!*' Now, your head higher. Concentrate yourself, as I told you. Look at the angle of the room—looking at a blank wall gives a blankness to the gaze. Please take it again."

"Bring—no, *give* me your robe——"

"There it is again. Till you are letter perfect there is no use for you to go on. You have to stop at the first word, wrong, you have to look for the other right one, and lose all the impetus which would give the right stress on the lost one. Try again, please."

"Give me my robe; put on my crown——"

"Very well—admirable—not to be excelled; that is, if you are going to dress for the evening. That will do very well for your dressing-room, but you will please to remember that this is a queen, going to dress for her last occasion—the daughter of kings, with her mind full of dying as a queen should."

As you may gather, who are well up in your Shakespeare, as you ought to be, this is a dramatic lesson from the last scene in Cleopatra. One speaker is a well-known teacher of elocution, who trains pupils for the stage, the other is a handsome young lady, who is visited with immortal longings to go on the stage. She has just finished the preliminary vowel exercise, which actors require as a daily training, which, as a prima donna runs over her scales in her dressing-room before she goes on the stage, to clear and warm up the voice. I am installed for the hour as a curious friend, in a low chair by the fire. Teacher and pupil quite forget the presence of any one else in the earnestness of the lesson. The room, a large parlor, is hung with photographs and engravings which strike one at once as singularly expressive. They are not quite the pictures which hang in ordinary drawing-rooms—the placid wood scenes of Durveaay and the sweet figures of millais' love scenes, and the lovely, wan Marguerite at her window. The vigorous German photographs from Schiller and "Lohengrin;" historical scenes, full of action, which make good studies for attitude and costume; and, of course, Sarah Bernhardt's serious, attentive head, and exquisitely draped figure, our Lady of the Drama, not to be profane, before whom girlish aspirants pour out the homage and adoration of their souls. The center-table drawn out of their way, and the young lady takes its place, with one arm advanced in a gesture of command, about to go through her lesson in Cleopatra. —[*New York Mail.*

Tramps and Their Signs.

Jim Ward, who signs himself "Chief," writes to the Troy *Times:* I have just returned to your city, after a tour of exploration down South lasting several months, and reading in your paper of January 21 an article on tramps and their marks, I desire to be allowed, as an old veteran of that "honorable" body known as "the tramp organization," to correct a few mistakes. I claim that the tramps were the originators of the mystic marks which have so frequently adorned fences, gate posts and doors, although it is possible that soap agents—members of another branch of the tramp organization—have since adopted these marks for business purposes. When tramping was good—and that was some years ago—it was understood by us that all houses where the inmates were good for food, clothing or money were to be marked in order to give us little trouble when we wanted any thing. Where only a meal could be obtained this fact was indicated by a small square, where a fellow would get the grand bounce an X expressed it, and for clothing he was directed by XX. Money houses were marked $; a house where the inmates were friendly but the dog unfriendly, was marked by a great big D. But at the present day tramps are not guided by these marks, as there are few houses where tramps are regularly fed. The tramp bore is now played out; but whatever may be said against the tramp, it can not be denied that he has made his mark in this world.

The Ringing Rocks.

A few days ago a representative of this paper, says the Reading (Pa.) *Times and Dispatch*, paid a visit to the geological wonder known as the Ringing Rocks in Montgomery County. Ringing Hill, as the people there call the eminence on which the celebrated rocks are found, is on the farm of Abraham Mench, in Pottsgrove Township, three miles northeast of Pottstown. The ringing rocks cover a space of about three-quarters of an acre. In this tract bowlders are piled upon bowlders of all shapes and forms, and so promiscuously arranged that considerable agility is required to walk over them without falling. As one steps from rock to rock a ringing sound, produced by the nails in the boot-heels, is plainly heard. On rapping the stones with a hammer, quite remarkable acoustic properties are revealed. Some of them give forth a rich, full tone which would probably vie with the best bell metal if the stones were fashioned into bells. One of them in particular, from its depth of tone, is known as the State-house bell. This was at one time among the largest of the rocks. It has been broken off, however, but still has preserved its strong, full tone. The general sound produced by striking the smaller stones resembles that of a blacksmith's anvil, some having a little clearer ring than others, and no two sounding just alike. In passing from one to another of the larger rocks one is reminded of the tapping of car-wheels by the train-inspectors. Thousands of people visit this natural phenomenon every summer. The rocks themselves bear evidence of this, the edges being battered off by hammer-strokes, and the sides of many having names carved upon them, some parties who were unwilling to take the time or trouble to chisel their names upon the rocks having resorted to paint, and considerable daubing has been done in various colors. The advertising fiend has not failed to put in his appearance; and we are made aware of the merits of patent medicines, of the place to buy carpet and the like upon every hand. We have not heard any satisfactory explanation of the cause of the ringing or bell-like sounds of these rocks. Some say it is owing to there being a cavern under them. This, however can have nothing to do with it, as when the rocks are removed they still have the same sound. One large and sonorous bowlder was taken to the Centennial and attracted a great deal of attention there. Another was sent to England a year or two ago. There is probably a metallic substance in this group of bowlders to which the ringing sound may be attributed. We have not heard, however, of any geological analysis being made. Half a mile east of the Ringing Rocks, and in the same range of hills, there is another group of bowlders which are much visited. Here a lofty pile of rocks surmounts a cavity of considerable depth, the whole being known as the "Stone House." Near by the stone house is a huge bowlder, some fifteen or twenty feet high, which, from its peculiar contour, is called the "Hay Stack." Besides their acoustic qualities there is another singular circumstance about the Ringing Rocks which visitors rarely fail to notice. Many of them have very strange marks, or indentations. At some points these resemble the tracks of a horse's hoof. Others are like the track of a wagon. Some of the larger indentations are said to resemble an elephant's foot, and fac-similes of the human foot are claimed to be found among the smaller ones.

Railroad Construction in 1879.

The total of the year was 4,430 miles, which is the largest since 1872, and has been exceeded only four times in the history of the country—the four years ending with 1872. For the eight years that we have made up this record, which includes road on which track was laid during the year, whether opened for traffic or not, and differs materially from the figures in *Poor's Manual* (which usually include only road open for business), the miles of new road constructed have been:

Year.	Miles.	Year.	Miles.
1872	7,340	1876	2,460
1873	5,883	1877	2,301
1874	2,025	1878	2,916
1875	1,561	1879	4,430

Compared with 1878, therefore, last year shows an increase of more than fifty per cent. At the close of 1878, according to *Poor's Manual*, the length of railroad in the country was 81,841 miles. Adding the mileage constructed in 1879, we have the grand total of 86,263 miles of railroad in the United States at the beginning of the current year, when the total of all Europe is about 100,000 miles, and of all the rest of the world probably not 20,000 miles. The increase in this country was at the rate of about five and one-half per cent., the increase of population being doubtless something less than three per cent., so that the number of inhabitants per mile of railroad has become less during the year. The population of the country is now probably about 49,500,000, and this gives 574 persons to support one mile of railroad, against 585 at the beginning of 1879. In Europe the average is about 3,333 per mile of road, and in Sweden, where the mileage in proportion to population is largest, it is 1,667. We have given these figures before, but we repeat them to emphasize the fact that this is peculiarly the railroad country, not simply because it is big, but because the same population requires a larger amount of railroad here than anywhere else.

Of the 4,430 miles, 923 1-2 miles are of narrow gauge (eighteen miles two feet, twenty-three miles three and one-half feet, and the rest three feet gauge). This is less than twenty-one per cent. of the whole, against about thirty per cent. in 1878.—*Railroad Gazette.*

QUAKER PLUM PUDDING.—Take slices of light bread, spread thin with butter, and lay in a pudding dish layers of this bread and raisins, till within an inch of the top. Add five eggs, well beaten, and a quart of milk, and pour over the pudding salt and spice to taste. Bake in twenty-five minutes, and eat with liquid sauce. Before using the raisins, boil them in a little water and put it all in.

A SACRAMENTO undertaker's conscience accused him of being glad when he heard of a death, and he became convinced that even the probability of an epidemic caused pleasurable emotion. He therefore committed suicide, leaving a letter in which he said that he could no longer remain in a business the profits of which were closely connected with human misery.

A MR. HARRIS, formerly of Preston, England, has left that town $1,250,000 for educational purposes, and $500,000 to what is known as Queen Anne's Bounty Fund for aiding poor clergy.

USEFUL AND SCIENTIFIC.

COURT PLASTER.—The *Scientific American* gives the following directions for making this useful article: Soak isinglass in a little warm water for seventy-four hours; then evaporate nearly all the water by gentle heat; dissolve the residue in a little dilute alcohol, and strain the whole through a piece of open linen. The strained mass should be a stiff jelly when cold. Now stretch a piece of silk or sarsenet on a wooden frame, and fix it tight with tacks or pack thread. Melt the jelly, and apply it to the silk thinly and evenly with a badger hair brush. A second coating must be applied when the first has dried. When both are dry, apply over the whole surface two or three coatings of balsam of Peru. Plaster thus made is very pliable, and never breaks.

REMOVING IRON RUST.—The difficulty of making small steel and iron articles bright by removing the "scale" or oxide can, says the *Electro-Metallurgist*, be readily overcome by the following process, without having recourse to the ordinary one—that of scouring after pickling with dilute sulphuric acid. First let the articles be plunged into a boiling solution of caustic, potash or soda, for a few minutes to remove greasy matter. Then rinse in clean water. Next, place the articles in a weak pickle of sulphuric acid—about half a pound of acid to each gallon of water. From ten to twenty minutes immersion is generally sufficient to loosen the scale. Let the article be again rinsed and afterward dipped by means of a perforated stoneware basket into a strong solution of commercial nitric acid for an instant, when the black oxide will be immediately removed. The dipping basket should have a rotary motion given to it while in the acid and then removed promptly and plunged into cold water. The article may then be coppered, silvered or gilt with ease.

A GOOD GRINDSTONE.—The *American Builder* thus sums up the qualities of a good grindstone: It should be strong, simple and clean; the trough expanded, to catch as much as possible of the drip- water and grit; a movable shield securely hinged to keep the water from splashing, and yet permit the stone to be used from either side; rests provided upon which to rest tools and the rod for turning the stone, these rests being arranged to move toward the center as the stone wears smaller. The bearings should be generous in size, proper provision being made for oiling without washing the grit into the bearings with the oil, and the ends of the bearings being protected by some device which effectually prevents the entrance of the grit. The stone should be secured to the shaft so that they can not turn with the nuts as they are screwed up or unscrewed. In hanging the stone great care should be taken to hang it true sidewise, not only for convenience in using, but because a stone that is not true sidewise can never be kept true edgewise.

ANOTHER LETTER-COPYING DEVICE.—Herr Adler, says the *English Mechanic*, has communicated to the Vienna Photographic Society a multiplying process based upon the use of the glue-plate, consisting of gelatine, glycerine and water (though the last named ingredient is present in a smaller quantity than usual), used in the hektograph and other similar processes. For writing or drawing, Herr Adler uses a concentrated solution of alum, to which, in order to render the writing or drawing visible upon the paper, a few drops of some aniline color are added. Before laying the writing or drawing upon the gelatine surface, pass a damp sponge over the latter, and allow the mixture to sink in for a few minutes, so as to have a greater effect upon the alum. Then lay the written side downward upon the gelatine, and, after the lapse of a few minutes, on removing it, the writing will be found reversed and eaten into the gelatine film as if it were engraved. By means of an india-rubber roller a little common printing ink is spread over the plate and absorbed by the lines sunk by the alum, and again rejected on the application of moisture upon the paper laid down upon it, and smoothed over it by the flat hand. When removed, this paper will have upon it the first impression of the writing or drawing. For each succeeding impression the plate must be inked, as in lithography, by the india-rubber roller. A considerable number of impressions can be taken.

HOW TO TEST GLUE.—An article of glue which will stand damp atmosphere, says the *American Journal of Industry*, is a desideratum among mechanics, especially pattern-makers. Few know how to judge of the quality, except by the price they pay for it. But price is no criterion; neither is color, upon which so many depend. Its adhesive and lasting properties depend more upon the material from which it is made, and the method of securing purity in the raw material, for if that is inferior and not well cleansed, the product will have to be unduly charged with alum or some other antiseptic, to make it keep during the drying process. Weathered glue is that which has experienced unfavorable weather while drying, at which time it is rather a delicate substance. To resist damp atmosphere well, it should contain as little saline matter as possible. When buying the article, apply your tongue to it, and if it tastes salt or acid, reject it for any thing but the commonest purpose. The same operation will also bring out any bad smell the glue may have. These are simple and ready tests, and are the ones usually adopted by dealers and large consumers. Another good test is to soak a weighed portion of dry glue in cold water for 24 hours, then dry again and weigh. The nearer it approaches to its original weight the better glue it is, thereby showing its degree of insolubility.

ONE way to utilize straw as a fertilizer is to stack or pile it in a yard for the purpose, where the stock can run to it. In a year or two there will be immense piles of half-rotten straw and manure that makes an excellent top-dressing the first year, and the second year it may be plowed under with great advantage to almost any kind of crop.

A WRITER in the *Country Gentleman* says that of every thing he has tried for the cure of roup in fowls, the best is to take pulverized copperas and put a teaspoonful in three quarts of water, and give it to them to drink. Should they not drink much in a day or two, mix it into cornmeal and feed to them.

FRANCISCAN friars have gone into the wine business extensively at Los Angelos, Cal.